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SUBJECT: WEEKLY NEPAL MEDIA REPORT FROM JUNE 1 TO 6, 2005

1. POLITICAL AFFAIRS

Go to court; not street: Vice Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Tulsigiri on Sunday suggested that the political parties and lawyers should ask for justice at the Supreme Court rather than take to the streets. On Sunday Giri said that rule of law couldn't be established by taking to the streets. "The security personnel will enforce law if the law professionals do not follow it while protesting," he warned. Giri's remarks followed the protest rally by members of Nepal Bar Association in prohibited areas of the capital. (Media reports, 6/6)

'Lift ban on news broadcast': More than 300 journalists took out a rally Sunday morning to demand that the government restore press freedom and lift news broadcast ban on private FM radios. Demonstrators, in the silent rally organized by the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ), held placards bearing messages demanding lifting of economic sanctions imposed on private media, restoration of press freedoms to pre-February 1 status, release of detained journalists and initiation of the democratic process. (Daily newspapers, 6/6)

Lawyers call for democracy: A huge rally of lawyers went around the city demanding the restoration of democracy and civil liberties in the country. The rally was taken out after the completion of the anniversary celebrations of Nepal Bar Association (NBA). The NBA also passed a 17-point declaration at the end of the 25th and 26th Central Executive Council meeting. In the declaration, it described recent political events unfolding since February 1 as an "infringement" on the rule of law and demanded the immediate dissolution of the "unconstitutional" government. They have also demanded the "scrapping" of the Royal Commission for Corruption Control. (Major reports, 6/5)

Koirala leaves for New Delhi: In a meaningful trip, Nepali Congress president and former Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala left for New Delhi on Saturday. Although termed as a trip for health treatment, the visit has assumed greater significance as it is the first one by Koirala after February 1. Koirala is expected to meet with high-level Indian officials and politicians, including Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. (Major reports, 6/4-5)

Open house passes 13 points: A mock session of the parliament organized in the street of Patan on Friday passed a 13-point resolution unanimously declaring that the reinstatement of the parliament and the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990 will be the starting point to resolve the current problems faced by the country. Chaired by Deputy Speaker of the dissolved House of Representatives Chitra Lekha Yadav, the session had participation by members from most of the political parties - in fact 95 percent of the parties represented in the earlier parliament were present in the session. Altogether 19 National Assembly members and 132 lawmakers from the House of Representatives were present at the mock parliamentary session. It also endorsed the common agenda of the seven political parties. (Major reports, 6/4)

UML's Jhalnath Khanal returned from airport: Security forces at the Tribhuvan International Airport stopped CPN-UML leader Jhalnath Khanal from boarding a flight to New Delhi Thursday afternoon. Khanal said he was traveling to New Delhi for a regular medical check-up at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. (Media reports, 6/3)

Rs five million bail each for Deuba, others: The Royal Commission for Corruption Control on Tuesday issued orders to release former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, one of his cabinet colleagues, three officials and a contractor, on bail amounting to Rs 5 million each. RCCC sent Deuba and Singh to jail for refusing to post a bail of Rs five million each imposed by it in connection with the Melamchi Drinking Water Project 'irregularities' case.

Deuba and his cabinet minister Prakash Man Singh rejected the bail and are still in custody while the three others (officials and contractors) have been released on bail. (Major reports, 6/1-3)

ICRC suspends RNA barracks visit: The International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) put on hold visits to detainees at army barracks throughout Nepal. The suspension comes after the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) allegedly failed to fully comply with the terms of an agreement with ICRC regarding what are called worldwide working modalities. "These are carefully worded conditions, set down by the Swiss-based organization, that virtually abstain from making any direct statement against state authorities or other parties to any conflict," it said. It further said the current difficulties center on the detention of Nepal's Maoist insurgents. It has also quoted Friedrun Medert, ICRC's delegation head in Nepal, as saying, "We have visited persons detained by the RNA since December 2002, and we had some problems as far as the respect of the ICRC's worldwide working modalities for and with detainees are concerned. We discussed these problems with RNA and felt that the steps it took were not sufficient to redress the situation," Medert added. RNA was not respecting Medert, however, and refused to go into details, as to which of the modalities. (All dailies, 6/1)

12. U.S. - NEPAL

U.S. report lauds Nepal's anti-trafficking efforts: Nepal has moved from Tier Two to Tier One in the fifth annual U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, which was released in Washington on Friday by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The change reflects

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the Nepali government's anti-trafficking efforts, specifically in prosecution, protection and prevention, said the report. "Despite political and security challenges, the government has sustained its efforts to combat trafficking in persons. Nepal has a National Plan of Action to combat trafficking, a draft Human Trafficking Control Bill to strengthen its 1986 anti-trafficking law and a National Rapporteur on trafficking," said the report, adding, "however, these commendable anti-trafficking efforts are hindered by political instability and security problems." "The U.S. government will continue to encourage the government of Nepal to focus on critical issues related to its anti-trafficking efforts," said a statement issued here by the American center. The TIP report is a comprehensive worldwide report on the efforts of governments to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons, or modern-day slavery. (Centrist "Kathmandu Post," E/D, 6/4, Circulation: 20,000)

Garment export to U.S. plunges by 43 percent: The export of the readymade garment to the United States, the largest market, has plummeted by 43 percent during the first five months of 2005. According to statistics of Garment Association Nepal (GAN), the export of the product stood at mere U.S. \$ 27.21 million during the period. It was valued US\$ 47.56 million during the period in 2004. The Nepali readymade garment has been losing competitiveness in the U.S. market since the U.S. pledged duty-and quota-free market access facilities to the Sub-Saharan and Caribbean countries. A bill named Trade Act 2005 has been tabled in the U.S. Senate and House of representatives promising duty-free market access for 14 LDCs of Asia and the Pacific this year. "This too could have given some respite to the dying industry, however serious discussion on it is still to begin," said GAN office bearers. (The Kathmandu Post, 6/5)

American team to train RNA soon?: The United States is planning to send instructors to train Royal Nepalese Army (RNA), and a team will arrive next week to conduct a course related to International Humanitarian Law, sources said. This will be first training by U.S. instructors after the February 1 royal takeover. The training, which U.S. army instructors were scheduled to provide to a unit of RNA's special forces in March, is also expected to begin soon. The course is likely to begin on Monday. "They (the Americans) have proposed to begin it from Monday but the Chief of Army Staff is yet to confirm," said an official. A team of four U.S. Army officers from Defense Institute of International Legal Studies had provided similar training to RNA officers last year. Participants will study and discuss a few cases on allegation of human rights abuse for understanding them according to the international law of armed conflict. RNA officials hope that the annual joint training exercises between the RNA soldiers and U.S. Army, particularly the U.S. Pacific Command officials, too, will take place this year. However, U.S. military assistance other than non-lethal still remains under review. (Pro-India "Himalayan Times," E/D, circulation: 25,000 and

Annapurna Post, V/D, circulation: 30,000, 6/3)

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